

DIVISION: FORMS 1 - IV

AGE GROUP: 12 plus

SERIES: "CURRENT AFFAIRS"

PROGRAMME: (3) "THE RICE INDUSTRY"

RECORDED

TRANSMISSION: Wednesday February 10, 1965

OPR: PLAY THEME

NARR: Hello boys and girls,

Suppose I asked you "What you had for lunch today? You could give me any number of answers; Pepper-pot, Curry and Roti, Meta-gee, and a host of other tasty things. But suppose I asked you if there was anything you ate nearly every day - you might, without having to think very hard say "Oh yes there is rice". And you would be right. For a very large number of people in Guyana use rice as their staple diet, that means their main meal - or the main part of their meals. We are so accustomed to rice in Guyana that we take it for granted - that is, we behave as though it's always been there and it will always be there. And if you live along the coastlands or you make a journey along the coastlands you're bound to see a familiar sight - fields and fields of rice - sometimes the rice plant seems to be struggling to get above the water that is every-where around them. Later on there is very little water and the rice fields make a beautiful sight - miles and miles of emerald green waving in the wind. And when you see this you know Guyana produces a lot of rice and she's well known in our part of the world as a rice producer.

Of course it was'nt always so, you know. There was a time when Guyana ^{produced} ~~did produce~~ almost no rice at all - we were famous for our cotton, our sugar, but

/certainly not for rice.

certainly not for rice. But that was nearly two centuries ago. But I'll tell you something, boys and girls. You noticed I said almost no rice at all. I did that deliberately. Because we do know that in the late 18th century a little rice was grown here. Listen to what a visitor to Guyana who came here in 1799 said. "He was talking about the Demerara river which he was sailing up". "The cultivation along the river is confined to sugar, coffee and plantains, with a small quantity of cocoa and rice. The latter (that is the rice) was recently introduced; however, little doubt was felt of its being made perfectly to answer the purpose of the colony; and if the cultivation was encouraged by Government, it would soon rival that of South Carolina, being aided by a great similarity of climate!"

This visitor was a far seeing man; but it took a long time before rice was grown in Guyana in anything like large quantities. It was when people from India began to settle in Guyana that they gave a push forward to the growing of rice. You see they were themselves accustomed to eating rice - and they quickly realised that with so much water on our coastlands, there really would not be very much difficulty in getting it to grow.

By the end of the Second World War Guyana was in the fore-front of rice producers in this part of the world. We not only had enough rice to feed ourselves; we were beginning to have enough rice to sell to other countries - to export, in other words. Now this is very important, boys and girls; and you can quickly see why. If a country like Guyana, which needs to be developed has to depend on only one crop, like sugar,

/to sell abroad ...

to sell abroad, then there is going to be trouble if the price of sugar drops. It means that less money will come into the country, not as many people will have jobs - and therefore there will be no money to spend all around.

But now Guyana has two major crops to sell abroad sugar and rice - this means that money can now come back to the country from selling both of them - and of course a far larger amount of people can share in the profits.

But we've got to be careful here - just as we are not the only country growing sugar so we are not the only country growing rice. Do you know the names of any other countries growing rice? Well there is Burma in the East and Indonesia. These places grow far, far more rice than we can. And they too want to sell it to other countries. So you see we have competitors - people who are in the race with us. For instance when I was a student at the U.W.I. in Jamaica I remember eating rice from Burma - and I kept wondering why I could not eat some rice from Guyana. You see, Jamaica was at that time buying some rice from us, but most from Burma. And one or two of the West Indian Islands - to whom we sell most of our rice - have been talking about growing their own rice - which again would make it harder for us to sell a lot of our rice to them. There is something ^{else} ~~more~~ to think about too. When we sell our rice we want a good price for it, a price that will make up for the cost of growing it and cutting it as well as will bring it some profit. And the people buying our rice want it as cheaply as they can get it - so of course there have to

be a lot of talking backward and forward until both sides agree on a price that satisfies each of them.

But where have we been selling most of our rice recently? I wonder if you know - well we've been selling a lot of it to Cuba - that largest of all the West Indian Islands not far from the United States. By the way I wonder if you know what ~~we produce?~~ *Cuba produces in large quantities that we produce also* Well you would be quite right if you said sugar. Now Cuba ~~is not~~ *does not seem to be* buying ~~any~~ of our rice at the moment. And so we have to turn to other parts of the West Indies to see if they will increase the amounts they want. That is why Guianese connected with the rice trade have gone to Puerto Rico ~~and~~ *to* discuss the whole matter of selling our rice. If they succeed in getting most of the rice, we have to sell abroad, sold, then of course, our rice industry will continue to bring into the country the money that we so much need. So when you are having lunch tomorrow or the next day and you have rice on your plate - don't only enjoy it - remember also that on that same rice depends a lot of our prosperity and the chance ~~to~~ move ahead.

So long children, until next week.

OPR: PLAY THEME